



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
NAVAL AVIATION WARFIGHTING DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
4755 PASTURE ROAD, BLDG 465  
FALLON, NV 89496-5000

5800  
N00  
26 Sep 16

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CAPT (b)(3)(A), (b)(6) ltr of 12 Sep 16

From: Commander, Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center  
To: File

Subj: COMMAND INVESTIGATION OF THE CLASS ALPHA AVIATION MISHAP  
INVOLVING FA-18C HORNET AIRCRAFT BUNO 165192 RESULTING IN THE  
LOSS OF THE AIRCRAFT ON 2 AUGUST 2016, APPROXIMATELY 10 MILES  
SOUTHEAST OF FALLON, NV

1. Contents noted.

(b)(3)(A), (b)(6)

Director of Headquarters

Copy to:  
CAPT (b)(3)

12 Sep 16

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To: Commander, Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center  
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Ref: (a) JAGMAN, Chapter II

Encl: (1) Command Investigation ltr 5800 Ser N1L of 25 Aug 16  
(2) CAPT (b)(3)(A), Interview Notes dtd 30 Aug - 1 Sep 16  
(3) Email from CDR (b)(3)(A), (b)(6) dtd 12 Sep 16  
(4) FCF Designation Letter dtd 4 Aug 15 and 1 Sep 15  
(5) Email from LT (b)(3)(A), dtd 6 Sep 16  
(6) Statement of ATCS (b)(3)(A), dtd 6 Sep 16  
(7) Memorandum of Agreement from 2009  
(8) CSFWPACINST 5450.3D dtd 29 Jan 14  
(9) NAWDC Flight Schedule dtd 2 Aug 16  
(10) Email from LT (b)(3)(A), dtd 9 Sep 16  
(11) Statement of AME2 (b)(3)(A), (b)(6) dtd 6 Sep 16  
(12) Statement of AE1 (b)(3)(A), dtd 6 Sep 16  
(13) Statement of LT (b)(3)(A), (b)(6) dtd 5 Sep 16  
(14) Naval Aviation Maintenance Program, Page 5.1.1.2.2  
(15) Statement of CDR (b)(3)(A), (b)(6) dtd 6 Sep 16  
(16) Statement of LT (b)(3)(A), dtd 5 Sep 16  
(17) Fallon, NV Weather on 2 Aug 16  
(18) Diagram of Supersonic Operating Areas  
(19) Statement from the Flight Doc dtd 9 Sep 16

### Preliminary Statement

1. Pursuant to enclosure (1) and in accordance with reference (a), a command investigation was conducted to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the crash involving a FA-18C on 2 Aug 2016, approximately 10 miles Southeast of Fallon, NV. This investigation was conducted upon request from the Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC) as a result of the Class A Mishap.

2. My direction was to investigate the circumstances surrounding the aviation Mishap, resulting in the loss of the aircraft, and any fault, neglect, or responsibility therefore, and recommend appropriate administrative or disciplinary action, if appropriate.

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3. All reasonably available evidence has been collected. All directives of the Convening Authority have been met. An extension of time for the completion of the investigation was not required. All evidence was collected through personal interviews and statements, telephone inquiries, and written correspondence.

#### Findings of Fact

1. The Mishap Pilot's name is CDR (b)(3)(A), (b)(6) (Call Sign: (b)(3)(A), (b)(6)). He is the CO of Top Gun and the N7 at NAWDC. [Encl 2]
2. The Mishap Pilot is a former Army Apache helicopter pilot that transitioned to the Navy. [Encl 2]
3. Here is a breakdown of the Mishap Pilot's flight hours [Encl 3]:
  - Total Flight Hours: 5,200 total (T-34C, T-2, T-45C, F/A-18 A-F, F-16A, UH-1H, AH-1S, AH-64A)
  - Apache Flight Hours: 1,500 AH-64A
  - F/A-18 A-D: 1,400
  - F/A-18 E/F: 2,000
  - FCF qualified pilot 2002. Served as FCF pilot 2002-2005 in the legacy Hornet. Prequalified at NAWDC in 2015. Flown approx. 10 FCFs since requalifying.
  - F/A-18 Super Hornet FCF pilot since 2005-present.
4. The Mishap Pilot had the proper training and designation as an FCF Pilot. [Encl 2, 4]
5. No sociological, psychological, or other human factors issues were discovered during the investigation. [Encl 2]
6. No issues related to fatigue, uses of medication, or intoxication were discovered during the investigation. [Encl 2]
7. The aircraft that was destroyed was an F/A-18C Hornet. BUNO 165192. [Encl 5]

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8. The aircraft was on loan from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA)-323, which is part of Marine Air Group (MAG)-11. [Encl 6]

9. There is a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by four organizations: NAWDC, MAG-11, MAG-31, and Strike Fighter Wing Pacific (SFWP) that specifies that MAG-11 and MAG-31 will provide aircraft for use by NAWDC to conduct Strike Fighter Tactics Instruction (SFTI). The MOA also authorizes qualified F/A-18 maintenance and ordnance personnel from MAG-11, MAG-31, and SFWP to perform maintenance and ordnance evolutions on MAG-11 and MAG-31 aircraft. [Encl 7]

10. Strike Fighter Wing Pacific is directed to provide maintenance support to NAWDC. [Encl 8]

11. The flight was authorized by NAWDC and the flight schedule was approved by CDR (b)(3)(A), (b)(6), the NAWDC operations officer. [Encl 2, 9]

12. Service life on this aircraft was approximately 6680 hrs. CNAF extended the TMS for this model to 8000 flight hours. [Encl 10]

13. The 7500 hour mark begins the aircrafts' cycle for scheduling into the Depots for inspections and overhauls. Without data on the specific aircraft, no other facts can be offered at this time. [Encl 10]

14. The last maintenance performed on the aircraft prior to the Mishap took place on 18 Jul and involved the replacement of the fire loop element. [Encl 2, 6, 11, 12]

15. All work on the fire loop element replacement was conducted and signed off by qualified personnel and the aircraft was placed in an 'UP' status. [Encl 2, 6, 11, 12, 13]

16. The next time the Mishap aircraft flew was on 27 Jul. It flew 1.3 hours and was returned in an 'UP' status with no maintenance issues. [Encl 2, 6]

17. There was a discrepancy as to whether or not an FCF was required on the Mishap aircraft. The paper copy of the Aircraft

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Discrepancy Book (ADB) did not call for an annual Pro A to be performed. The electronic copy of the ADB required a Pro A to be performed. [Encl 2, 13]

18. SFWPD followed the correct rules outlined in the Naval Aviation Maintenance Program [Encl 14], and used the electronic copy. [Encl 13]

19. The airframe was in full compliance with pertinent technical directives. [Encl 2]

20. The duration of the Pro A was scheduled for 45 minutes. [Encl 9]

21. The pilot conducted a standard NATOPS brief (done by himself since the plane was single-piloted). Weather, NOTAMS, working areas, emergency procedures, and alternates were reviewed. [Encl 2, 15]

22. A Quality Assurance (QA) brief was conducted in Maintenance Control with the Mishap Pilot, a Quality Assurance representative, and a Safe For Flight (SFF) representative. [Encl 2, 6, 15]

23. The Mishap Pilot properly reviewed the electronic copy of the ADB and signed for the aircraft. [Encl 2, 6, 15]

24. All preflight checks and ground checks were normal and the aircraft took off at approximately 0950. [Encl 2, 15, 16]

25. Weather conditions prior and throughout the flight were under VMC with greater than 10 statute miles of visibility. Winds were 4 mph out of the West. [Encl 2, 17]

26. Brief description of the flight path and maneuvers of the Mishap aircraft as reported by the Mishap Pilot: After departure, Mishap Pilot flew along the Still Water Mountains to the Northeast of the airfield and began conducting checks required by a Pro A. He then proceeded to Supersonic Operating Area B [Encl 18]. He climbed to 36,000 feet. He had a malfunction and began executing emergency procedures while descending and turning towards NAS Fallon, NV. Continuing to

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execute emergency procedures, he descended to roughly 11,000 MSL and flew along Dixie Valley. He continued a descent with the intent of an emergency landing at NAS Fallon. At 1042 local time, and approximately 3,000 AGL and 225 kts, he safely ejected 4-5 nm Southeast of the airfield. [Encl 2, 15, 16]

27. At the time of ejection, gear was still up, Flaps were at auto. [Encl 2, 15]

28. All emergency equipment functioned properly. [Encl 2, 15]

29. Pilot ejected in very flat, farmland terrain with no damage to any civilian property. Property was owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). [Encl 2]

30. Base rescue vehicles picked up the Mishap Pilot and took him to Banner Churchill Community Hospital Emergency Department. [Encl 2, 19]

31. Mishap Pilot received the following injuries: Mild abrasions to his face and lower extremities, contusions on both shoulders from the parachute risers, a mild right ankle sprain, and myofascial back pain. [Encl 2, 19]

32. Mishap Pilot is expected to make a full medical recovery. [Encl 19]

### Opinions

1. Neither Maintenance personnel nor processes contributed to this Mishap. My investigation did not reveal any mistakes, malpractice, or misconduct on the part of any maintenance personnel. All personnel were qualified in their individual work areas and procedures were followed in accordance with the Naval Aviation Maintenance Program. [FF 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19]

2. Weather and terrain played no part in causing or contributing to the mishap. [FF 25, 26, 29] ]

3. The Mishap Pilot, CDR (b)(3)(A), (b)(6), was in the line of duty, not due to misconduct. There was no misconduct on his part, and he

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was in complete compliance with all regulations and procedures  
governing this flight. [FF 4, 5, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23]

4. The Mishap aircraft was the 'work horse' of the SFTI  
detachment during the 10 week period. The jet had performed  
extremely well and there were no maintenance trends noted that  
would have contributed to this Mishap. Based on that  
information, and the previous Opinions state above, I believe  
this was a possible material/structural failure of the aircraft.  
[FF 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 23]

#### Recommendations

1. I do not recommend any administrative or disciplinary action  
be taken on any individual. There was no fault or neglect on  
the part of anyone involved in the Mishap.

Very Respectfully,

(b)(3)(A), (b)(6)